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SOME FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON ZURVANISM

Cumont's learnedly argued thesis, that the Mithraic mysteries derived their pantheon and theology almost wholly from the Zurvanism of Asia Minor¹, has been under repeated attack over the past decades, from orientalist and classicist alike, so that its demolition has begun to seem almost complete². His interpretation of Zurvanism was in any case idiosyncratic. He rejected the view, first put forward in 1873 by Spiegel, with characteristic acumen and brevity, that this was a Zoroastrian movement which developed under the Achaemenians through Persian contacts with Babylonian civilization³, and saw it instead as a religion which had evolved independently of Zoroastrianism through the impact of Chaldaean lore on Old Iranian beliefs. Few if any Iranists appear to have accepted this theory entirely, but it had significant repercussions which are still being felt. Thus Nyberg warmly endorsed it with regard to the close link between Zurvanism and the Mithraic mysteries⁴; and there can be little doubt that Cumont's belief that Zurvanism itself grew out of the Old Iranian religion stimulated the Swedish scholar to evolve his own equally idiosyncratic theory that Zurvan in fact belonged to that religion, and was older than Zoroastrianism, his concept owing nothing either to it or to Babylonian learning⁵.

This theory has been maintained and developed chiefly by G. Widengren, in successive publications, with the wholly speculative claim that down to the end of the Parthian period Zurvanism was an independent religion with its own doctrines and rites⁶. He still in 1980 upheld Cumont's idea that Zurvan was the supreme god of the Mithraic pantheon⁷; and this involved his continued support for Cumont's identification of Zurvan (of whom no representation was known) with the so-called "lion-headed god" of Mithraic iconography. The statues of this strange, often winged, being vary a little in detail⁸; but his limbs are usually entwined by a snake, a creature which in some contexts symbolises time⁹, and this gave Cumont positive justification for the identification. Nevertheless, some scholars found reasons thereafter for seeing him rather as Ahriman¹⁰, and some then contrived to interpret him as both¹¹. Mithraic iconography cannot be traced, however, before Roman imperial times; and by now it has been admirably demonstrated

that in fact he belongs, in his outer seeming, to the astrological science of that period, which thus represents the "person" of Saturn ~ the Sun as the first decan of the sign of Leo¹².

A striking hypothesis, powerfully presented, is not, however, readily abandoned; and it was partly because of the identification of this Mithraic figure with Zurvan that R. Ghirshman saw Zurvan, together with Ohrmazd and Ahriman, in a winged figure with two smaller beings emerging from his shoulders depicted on a Luristan bronze of the eighth-seventh centuries B.C.¹³ This figure is at the centre of a group. Nothing is known of the putatively Iranian makers of this bronze (and another related metal piece), nor yet of the local culture which they presumably encountered. That Iranians should have chosen to make representations of their own gods at so early a date appears unlikely, and certainly needs stronger evidence to establish it as a possibility than a highly imaginative interpretation of a wholly unfamiliar scene. Yet this interpretation was accepted by more than one scholar as proof of Nyberg's otherwise purely speculative thesis of a pre-Zoroastrian Zurvan¹⁴. -- Zurvan has also been seen in the "Ancient of days" of *Daniel* 7.9; but this identification too seems unfounded, since there are strong indications that the vision in which the "Ancient" appears has Canaanite antecedents¹⁵.

In 1949 W. B. Henning, combating Nyberg's theory of an Old Iranian Zurvan, firmly restated the essentials of Spiegel's analysis¹⁶, which had already been endorsed by O. von Wesendonk and A. Christensen¹⁷; but unfortunately for the progress of Zurvanite studies R.C. Zaehner in his massive monograph¹⁸ pursued a genially eclectic course, adopting at different stages of his work almost every theory which had by then been advanced on the subject. He began indeed by presenting Zurvanism as Spiegel had done¹⁹; but then, following Cumont, linked it with the Mithraic mysteries, and thence with *daēva*-worship²⁰. Later, with no attempt at reconciling these interpretations with his first one, he saw Zurvan as an ancient western Iranian god, the counterpart of an eastern Iranian Vayu²¹; as a sky god who was also an earth god; as a god of death²²; and as the macrocosm²³. Like Nyberg, whom he was largely following, he embedded in all such dubious matter nuggets of learning and shrewd observation; but the general impression given by his book was that Zurvanism was of huge complexity, a cloudy, confused subject not to be pinned down with any clarity as to either date or doctrine.

A more lucid and integrated analysis --and necessarily therefore briefer-- was rapidly provided by U. Bianchi²⁴. He upheld the opinion that Zurvanism was a Zoroastrian movement of Achaemenian date, but like von Wesendonk²⁵ saw it as having a Greek as well as a Babylonian component even at that early epoch. The Greeks, he thought, had provided it with the concept of *archē* "beginning, first principle"²⁶; and Zurvan he compared with Ouranos as a theogonical but not a ruling god²⁷.

Meanwhile the over-large claims by Zaehner for the importance of Zurvanism led R.N. Frye to go to another extreme. After toying in his turn with various theories, he committed himself to a new one of his own, namely that Zurvanism was little more than speculation about time, indulged in in the Sasanian period by the upper classes and the court²⁸, and this he was still maintaining in 1984. This reductive interpretation can hardly be said to cover the facts; but much the same course has been followed by Sh. Shaked, except that he sees it rather as a popular variant of Zoroastrianism, "not sanctioned by the established clergy", and quite unorganised²⁹. He based this idea of its popular origins largely on what he considered to be the "theologically naive" nature of some of the recorded Zurvanite myths. Yet Manichaeism made use of some remarkably primitive-seeming myths in support of its intricate doctrines; and Nyberg was surely right (with others) in regarding Zurvanism as typically the fruit of priestly speculation³⁰. (He in fact made the same observation as Shaked about the nature of certain of its myths, but deduced from this instead their descent from a remote antiquity, against which see, justly, H. Corbin³¹.)

One reason for denying any importance to Zurvanism is that this helps to account for its later disappearance. Even in the Persian *rivāyats* only one Zurvanite statement has been identified: "Ōrmazd and Ahri-man became manifest through time (*az zamāne*)"; and this is qualified by the gloss: "Ōrmazd became manifest through the abundance of his own selfhood (*be afzūnī az xodīy-e xod*)", which reasserts the orthodox doctrine of his self-existence³². Among the Parsis Anquetil du Perron found that knowledge of Zurvan was limited to awareness of references to him as an ancient king, exemplar of longevity, in the Pazand introductions to two *āfrīns*³³. Moreover, it is true that much of the material adduced by Zaehner to attest the prevalence of Zurvanism in Sasanian times can be discarded as relating merely to time in general, or to time as the instrument of Ohrmazd. Yet much solid proof remains of the existence of Zurvanite beliefs, and these can indeed be traced

back to the Achaemenian era. Cumont had good grounds for holding that the Iranian religion in Asia Minor then was Zurvanite; for wherever there are sufficient data to judge from, they show that the Zoroastrianism which survived there after Alexander, as a legacy from the days of the Persian Empire, was of that tendency³⁴.

When Cumont first wrote, this was known of Cappadocia, on the testimony of Bishop Basil, and of Level Cilicia, on that of Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia, both of the fourth century³⁵, in whose dioceses the religion of the *magousaioi* was still stubbornly thriving. Basil, who had been asked about the supposed descent of these people from Abraham, reported that the magi (i.e. their priests³⁶) had told him nothing about that, but that "in fact they claim a certain Zarnuas as the founder of their race". Whether his reporting here is quite accurate, it is impossible to tell³⁷. Theodore, who was concerned with refuting doctrine, provides more detail (even in Photius' meagre summary of his work). "Zarouam", he records, also called "Fortune" (Tyche), was "the originator of everything. ... And when he was making a libation in order that Hormisdas might be born to him, the latter was born, together with Satan". This is one version of the basic Zurvanite myth, which embodies always the monistic heterodoxy that evil is not a force wholly strange and external to good, but has been generated with good by the supreme being, Zurvan³⁸. The myth is recorded in diverse forms in Sasanian and early Islamic times³⁹; and there seems no need to seek (as has been done⁴⁰) for a single textual source for it. Bishop Theodore, a redoubled polemicist who was attacking a living religion, may reasonably be supposed to have heard it from Zurvanite magi in his own diocese; and it is likely to have been known in one form or another to intelligent Zurvanites everywhere, laity as well as priests.

The doctrine taught by this myth made Zurvanism indeed, as Zaehner characterized it, a "major heresy"⁴¹; and hence it can only have become prominently and securely established among the Zoroastrians of these Achaemenian satrapies with support from the throne. The probability has accordingly been suggested that its spread is to be linked with the adoption of the Zoroastrian calendar, and the furtherance of an image cult, as one of the major religious innovations of the long reign of Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.)⁴². Yet even with royal backing, Zurvanism must have needed vigorous propaganda to make it acceptable; and this was presumably the work of priestly proselytizers, men of conviction who visited satraps and local magi and entered into

persuasive discussion with them, expounding the new doctrine. Their success is proved by the fact that Zurvanism took such firm root that in Cilicia and Cappadocia it was still the dominant form of Zoroastrianism there some 700 years after the ending of Persian suzerainty.

From this it seemed reasonable to infer, as Cumont did, that Zurvanism had been established under Achaemenian rule in all the Zoroastrian communities of Asia Minor. Subsequently the probability of this was increased by the identification of Zurvanite elements in the Qumran writings, part evidently of a debt to Zoroastrianism incurred by fringe groups of Jews more generally⁴³. This suggested that Zurvanism had also flourished (as was to be expected) among the Zoroastrians of Babylonia and Syria. Further, a Zurvanite passage was noted in the great inscription of Antiochus I of Commagene (69-c.31 B.C.). His kingdom was bordered by Syria, Cilicia, Cappadocia and Armenia (where Zurvanism is attested in Sasanian times); and his family, a branch of the Orontids, claimed descent from a daughter of Artaxerxes II. It would have been remarkable, therefore, if the Zoroastrianism of Commagene had not been Zurvanite. The passage in question occurs in the preamble to the regulations (*nomos*) of Antiochus' cult, in which he declares: "It is commanded to the generations of all men whom Boundless Time (*Chronos apeiros*) shall, through its destiny for the life of each, set in later possession of this land, that they keep it inviolate"⁴⁴. *Chronos apeiros*, it was pointed out⁴⁵, exactly renders Avestan *Zurvan akarana*, and is duly represented here as an active and conscious force, controlling the fates of generations. Schaeder also saw the four great gods of Antiochus' cult as symbolising the tetramorphous Zurvan; but this appears more doubtful⁴⁶.

Although Antiochus' cult was a syncretism, the case has been argued for its having been shaped by his magi, and being Iranian in its framework and main features⁴⁷. The Orontids and their priests can reasonably be supposed to have maintained a Zurvanite form of Zoroastrianism from early in the fourth century B.C., so that by Antiochus' day it had a three-hundred-year-old tradition behind it. Unfortunately in his inscriptions the king was more concerned with the regulations and endowments for his cult than with doctrine, this having presumably barely changed; and one passage shows strikingly how the moral theology of Zoroastrian dualism survived the imposition of Zurvanite monism. In it Antiochus assures those who are free of unrighteousness and zealous for holy works, and who maintain his cult, that "Zeus-Oromasdes" will hearken to their prayers, and that he and

other divinities will be fellow-fighters with them in their good undertakings⁴⁸. This concept of the beneficent gods fighting beside righteous people, implicitly against evil, is, it is agreed, a wholly Zoroastrian one, rooted in that religion's cosmic and ethical dualism; and it was evidently unaffected by Zurvanism, because according to that heterodoxy Zurvan withdrew, his sons having been born, and left Ohrmazd to become creator and to contend against Ahriman, good against evil, as in Zoroaster's own teachings. There would not even have been the alien element of astral determinism in early Zurvanite belief, since this belongs to the astrology of Hellenistic times. The lion-horoscope of Antiochus' cult appears to be in the older tradition of Babylonian celestial divination, in which heavenly phenomena were regarded as a means by which the gods declared their will to men, with no power of causation being attributed to the stars themselves⁴⁹. There is nothing to suggest that the magi of Commagene, even though hellenised, were familiar with the theories of Greco-Roman horoscopic astrology, with their Aristotelian underpinning; and it is noteworthy that in the only account of Zurvanism from pre-Sasanian times, that attributed by Damascius to Eudemos of Rhodes (of the fourth century B.C.)⁵⁰, there is mention of time and place, but none of fate, that element in its doctrine being seemingly less prominent then.

Antiochus further expresses the orthodox hope that at death his spirit will ascend to the throne of "Zeus-Oromasdes"⁵¹; and his trust in the gods whom he worshipped implies the larger hope also that one day they with the righteous will triumph over evil. His inscriptions in fact attest what had been generally surmised, namely that adoption of Zurvanism did not change the effective beliefs of Zoroastrians or their expectations of the future, both of which moulded their actual conduct. The monistic belief in Time which it superimposed, although theologically important, was evidently of limited influence on its adherents' lives. It may also be reasonably presumed that it brought about no change in their rituals of worship, which they, like the orthodox, would still have offered, directly or through the lesser *yazatas*, to Ohrmazd the Creator.

With the same forms of worship, the same ethical principles, and to a large extent a common body of belief, Zurvanites and the orthodox evidently co-existed for many centuries, sharing the name of Mazda-worshippers but still (as Muslim writers later attested) being conscious to some degree of a difference in theology. Only one Pahlavi passage, it has been noted, expresses orthodox hostility to Zurvanite doctrine⁵²;

and under the Sasanians open polemic was presumably held in check by the power of the throne, for the testimony of Christian and Manichaean sources shows that Zurvanism was professed by the Sasanian kings themselves, part presumably of a western Iranian tradition going back to Achaemenian times⁵³.

It used to be generally assumed that Zurvanism vanished almost immediately after the Arab conquest, but better knowledge of the Muslim sources shows that this was not so. Down to the tenth century A.D. Muslim polemic against Zoroastrianism was often directed against Zurvanite beliefs⁵⁴. This may have been partly because the doctrinal weaknesses of the heterodoxy made these the easier target; but a redoubtable fighter like 'Abd al-Jabbār (932-1025) would not have wasted his attacks on a non-existent foe. Thereafter little notice was taken of any form of Zoroastrianism by the Muslims of Iran, and Zurvanism did entirely disappear. Perhaps the battering ram of Muslim argument had shaken the convictions of some Zurvanites and made them more open to representations by their orthodox co-religionists; and doubtless ever-increasing poverty and hardship concentrated thoughts generally on Zoroaster's own teachings, and the hope of salvation. Orthodoxy had clearly never surrendered to Zurvanism, despite the royal patronage which the latter enjoyed; and in the end its triumph may well have been due above all to its inherent strength, that "chronic vigour" which Cardinal Newman held to be one of the tests of religious validity.

NOTES

¹ *Textes et monuments relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, I, Brussels, 1899, pp. 8, 20, 78, 85, 234.

² The most detailed and fundamental criticisms have been by S. Wikander, *Études sur les mystères de Mithras*, Lund, 1951, and R.L. Gordon, "Frantz Cumont and the doctrines of Mithraism", *Mithraic Studies*, ed. J.R. Hinnells, Manchester, 1975, I, pp. 215-248. For an admirable survey of the state of the subject see R. Beck, "Mithraism since Frantz Cumont", *ANRW* II.17.4, 1984, pp. 2002-2115.

³ *Eranische Alterthumskunde* II, Leipzig, 1873, pp. 4-12, 182-187.

⁴ *Die Religionen des Alten Iran*, tr. by H.H. Schaeder, Leipzig, 1938, repr. 1966, p. 390 with n. 1.

⁵ Op.cit., pp. 25, 105, 380 ff.

⁶ E.g. *Die Religionen Irans*, Stuttgart, 1965, p. 219.

⁷ "Reflections on the origins of the Mithraic Mysteries", *Perennitas, Studi in onore di A. Brelich*, Rome, 1980, pp. 654 f.; cf. his earlier "The Mithraic mysteries in the Greco-Roman world, with special regard to their Iranian background", *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 363, Rome, 1966, pp. 441 f.

⁸ See in detail J.R. Hinnells, "Reflections on the lion-headed figure in Mithraism", *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg* I, Acta Iranica 4, 1975, pp. 333-369.

⁹ See R. Beck, "Interpreting the Pontic Zodiac: II", *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, 2, 1978, pp. 107-116.

¹⁰ For the bibliography and arguments see Beck, *ANRW* II.17.4, pp. 2034-2035, 2088.

¹¹ J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Aiōn et le Léontocéphale, Mithras et Ahriman", *La Nouvelle Cleo*, X, 1960, pp. 1-8; C. Colpe in *Cambridge History of Iran* III, ed. E. Yarshater, 1983, p. 855.

¹² Beck, *Planetary gods and planetary orders in the Mysteries of Mithras*, EPRO 109, Leiden, 1988, pp. 99-100.

¹³ "Le Dieu Zurvan sur les bronzes du Luristan", *Artibus Asiae*, 21, 1958, pp. 37 ff.; see further his *Iran-Protoiranier, Meder, Achameniden*, Munich, 1964, pp. 51-2 with Abb.63, 64; p. 70 with Abb. 91.

¹⁴ Duchesne-Guillemin, "Explorations dualistes avec Ugo Bianchi", *L'Antiquité Classique*, XXVIII, 1959, p. 291 (with modifications to Ghirshman's interpretation); J. de Menasce, "Reflexions sur Zurvān", *A Locust's Leg, Studies in Honour of S.H. Taqizadeh*, ed. W.B. Henning and E. Yarshater, London, 1962, p. 184; Colpe, "Ugo Bianchi/Ill Dualismo Religioso und Zamān i Öhrmazd", *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 222, 1970, p. 19.

¹⁵ For the extensive literature on this see O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, an introduction*, tr. P.A. Ackroyd, Oxford, 1965, p. 526 n. 47; J.J. Collins, "The Mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll", *Vetus Testamentum*, XXV, 1975, p. 601 n. 23; A. Hultgård, "Das Judentum in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit und die iranische Religion", *ANRW* II.19.1, 1979, pp. 535-536.

¹⁶ Zoroaster, politician or witch-doctor?, Ratanbai Katrak Lectures 1949, Oxford, 1951, p. 49.

¹⁷ For references see below, note 41.

¹⁸ *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian dilemma*, Oxford, 1955, repr. New York, 1972.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 5, 20.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 80 ff.

²² Ibid., pp. 239-242.

²³ Ibid., p. 242.

²⁴ *Zamān i Öhrmazd*, Turin, 1958, Part III (pp. 149 ff).

²⁵ *Das Weltbild der Iranier*, Munich, 1933, p. 257.

²⁶ Op.cit., p. 163.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 241-243.

²⁸ "Zurvanism again", *Harvard Theological Review*, LII, 1959, pp. 63-73; *The History of Ancient Iran*, Munich, 1984, p. 321 with n. 97.

²⁹ *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages (Denkard VI)*, Persian Heritage Series, ed. E. Yarshater, no. 34, Boulder, Colorado, 1979, p. xxiv.

³⁰ Op.cit., p. 388.

³¹ Nyberg, ibid., p. 380; Corbin, "Le temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et dans l'ismaélisme", *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, p. 166 n. 38.

³² Persian text given by B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, Bombay, 1932, p. 438 (who pointed out that the passage was an attempt to explain away Zurvanite doctrine); Eng. tr. and commentary by Zaehner, op.cit., p. 418.

³³ *Zend Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre*, Paris, 1771, II, pp. 90, 99.

³⁴ Cumont, op.cit., pp. 9-10.

³⁵ The Greek texts are conveniently reproduced, with bibliography, by Zaehner, op.cit., pp. 447, 448 (G 2, 5).

³⁶ His usage proves that sometimes at least the term *magousaioi* was used, like *majūs* in Islamic times, for Zoroastrians generally, with *magoi* being specifically for their priests. Misunderstanding of this fact has led to the odd assumption by Western scholars that "flocks of magi" migrated to Asia Minor without the support there of a Zoroastrian laity, on which see Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Hb. d. Orientalistik, ed. B. Spuler, I.viii.1.2.2A), II, Leiden, 1982, pp. 230-231.

³⁷ Zaehner (op.cit., p. 113) assumed that it was, comparing Moses of Chorene I.9 (see his p. 144, note B); and he found in this apparent tradition of Zurvan as the ancestor of man justification for his theory that he was regarded as the macrocosm. It seems possible, however, that in Bishop Basil's case some confusion arose through his inquiries about Abraham.

³⁸ This is admirably treated by Corbin, art.cit., pp. 154-155. On the debasing of the myth's original forms by polemicists see ibid., p. 166.

³⁹ See Zaehner, op.cit., pp. 421-441, 451; G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes, Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers*, Paris, 1974, pp. 255 ff.

⁴⁰ See Zaehner, op. cit., pp. 419-421.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5. Cf. von Wesendonk, op.cit., p. 258 ("die zervanische Lehre ... mit der alten Doktrin Zarathuštras nicht mehr zu tun hat"); Nyberg, op.cit., p. 384 ("strenge Zoroastrier im Westen haben sich immer gegen die zervanistische Fassung des [Zwillings] mythis verwahrt"); Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed., Copenhagen, 1944, p. 154 ("une conception ... contraire au caractère fondamental du Zoroastrisme"); Corbin, art.cit., pp. 163-168, 171 ("il reste dans le schéma du zervanisme ... quelque chose d'irréductible à l'exigence mazdéenne").

⁴² Boyce, op.cit., pp. 240-241.

⁴³ See with bibliography Boyce in M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, III, Ch.10 (in press), and cf. G. Gnoli, "L'évolution du dualisme iranien et le problème zurvanite", RHR CCI, 1984, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁴ N[imrud Dagh] 111-115 (excerpted by Zaehner, op.cit., pp. 449-450).

⁴⁵ H.H. Schaeder, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*, Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, 1924-1925, pp. 139-40. This interpretation of the lines, first proposed by H. Gressmann, was endorsed by J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, London, 1913, repr. 1972, p. 107; J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, Paris, 1938, I, pp. 67-68; Nyberg, op.cit., p. 390; Christensen, op.cit., p. 149; von Wesendonk, op.cit., p. 257; and Widengren, op.cit., p. 219. The two latter went further, following H. Junker, *Über iranische Quellen der hellenistischen Aion-Vorstellung*, Vorträge der Bibl. Warburg 1921-1922, p. 151, who had understood them in the same way, but had sought also to see a reference to the Zoroastrian concept of limited time, *Zurvān ī dagrand xwadāy*, in Antiochus' wish, expressed earlier in the same inscription, that his body might rest in its tomb "for countless ages" *eis ton apeiron aiona*. (N 20, text with German tr. in H. Waldmann, *Die kommagenischen Kultreformen*, EPRO 34, Leiden, 1973, pp. 64/72). A. Nock (*Harvard Theological Review*, 27, 1934, pp. 80-81) reasonably objected, however, that the use in both passages of the adjective *apeiros* (with, moreover, a different substantive) hardly bore out this interpretation. On these grounds Duchesne-Guillemin, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, Paris, 1953, pp. 123-124, rejected a Zurvanite interpretation for either passage; but because Junker pressed the case too far is no good reason for doubting the Zurvanite character of ll. 111-115. Subsequently a classicist, H. Dörrie, questioned the interpretation of *chronos apeiros* as a proper name in these lines on the grounds that *chronos* is used elsewhere in Antiochus' inscriptions as the common noun "time" (see his *Der Königskult des Antiochos von Kommagene*, Göttingen, 1964, pp. 194-196); but in the Avesta *zurvān* also appears as both a common noun and the name of the god of Time, the context being the defining factor.

⁴⁶ Thus even Zaehner, himself a perhaps over-ardent discoverer of Zurvanite tetrads, was doubtful about this one (op.cit., p. 31).

⁴⁷ Boyce, loc.cit. in n. 43. Otherwise Colpe, *Cambridge History of Iran* III, pp. 842-843.

⁴⁸ Arsameia 248-256 (Waldmann, op.cit., pp. 89/95-96).

⁴⁹ See F. Rochberg-Halton, "Elements of the Babylonian contribution to Hellenistic astrology", *JAOS* 108, 1988, pp. 51-62.

⁵⁰ Apud Zaehner, op.cit., p. 447.

⁵¹ N 36-44 (Waldmann, op.cit., pp. 64/72).

⁵² DkM 829.1 ff. (Zaehner, op.cit., pp. 429-30, with bibliography; cf. his pp. 80-81).

⁵³ Even before the Manichaean evidence was known Spiegel, op.cit., II, p. 184, noted that at this period Zurvanite beliefs were widely held, and by highly placed persons. Von Wesendonk, *Das Wesen der Lehre Zarathuštras*, Leipzig 1927, pp. 19-20, established that in certain reigns the kings themselves could be shown to be Zurvanites; and Christensen, op.cit., pp. 150 and ff., drew from this fact the reasoned inference that this was the standard form of Zoroastrianism in their time, i.e. that it was the belief of their whole dynasty. The success of the Sasanians' own propaganda (unwittingly but admirably furthered by Firdowsi) that they were the defenders of the true Zoroastrian faith has made this generally unacceptable however; and Zaehner reverted implausibly to von Wesendonk's theory, see op.cit., pp. 35 ff., with, contra, Boyce, 'Some reflections on Zurvanism', *BSOAS* XIX, 1957, pp. 304-308; *Zoroastrians, their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 3rd revised reprint, London, 1987, pp. 112-113, 117, 118-120. In *Cambridge History of Iran*, III, Frye (pp. 140, 149), Duchesne-Guillemin (pp. 886, 887, 895-896, 899, 901-902), and Asmussen (pp. 937-938) all, with varying degrees of firmness, attribute orthodoxy to the Sasanians, but without (to judge from their published texts) having given full consideration to all the data.

⁵⁴ Monnot, op.cit. in n. 39, p. 254 n. 2.